

Obama's Iran Deal Moves Forward; Thank These Democrats

U.S. Senate Democrats blocked legislation meant to kill the Iran nuclear deal for a third time on Thursday, securing a major diplomatic victory for President Barack Obama.

By a vote of 56-42, the Republican-majority Senate fell short of the 60 votes needed in the 100-member chamber to advance the legislation as all but four of Obama's fellow Democrats backed the nuclear pact announced in July.

With no more Senate votes planned this week, the result ensured that Congress will not pass before a midnight deadline a resolution of disapproval that would have crippled the agreement by eliminating Obama's ability to waive many U.S. sanctions.

U.S. Senators Chuck Schumer and Ben Cardin, senior Democrats who oppose the nuclear agreement with Iran, said on Wednesday that they would vote against a Republican effort to require new conditions before President Barack Obama could lift any sanctions under the deal.

After Senate Democrats twice blocked a disapproval resolution meant to kill the nuclear agreement, Republican Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell introduced amendments to the measure that would bar Obama from lifting sanctions on Iran unless it recognizes Israel's right to exist and releases American prisoners.

Democrats have argued for months that the agreement should not be tied to non-nuclear issues.

Schumer, the number three Democrat in the Senate, and Cardin,

the top Democrat on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, sided with Republicans and against fellow Democrats in the two previous procedural votes.

Under legislation Obama signed into law in May, Congress had until Today to pass a resolution disapproving of the nuclear agreement. If the resolution were to have passed, it would have crippled the deal by barring Obama from lifting many U.S. sanctions.

Schumer and Cardin remain opposed to the deal itself, their aides said.

(Reporting by Patricia Zengerle; Editing by Eric Walsh and Christian Plumb)

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